

EMERGENCY CONSERVATION WORK
Office of the Director
Washington, D. C.

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESS

December 4, 1936

FOR RELEASE TO MONDAY MORNING PAPERS, DECEMBER 7, 1936.

Development of the Blackwater Migratory Bird Refuge in Dorchester County, Maryland, one of the first of the Bureau of Biological Survey wild life refuges to which Civilian Conservation Corps camps were assigned in the summer of 1933, will be completed on December 8 and the CCC camp assigned to the project transferred to another location, it was announced today at the office of Robert Fechner, Director of Emergency Conservation Work. Camp BF-1, now located at the Blackwater Migratory Bird Refuge, will be transferred to the Jefferson National Forest, Virginia, and designated F-22. The post office address of the camp will be Pembroke, Virginia.

The Blackwater Migratory Bird Refuge is located about ten miles south of Cambridge along the Big Blackwater River. It was purchased by the Government in 1932 and placed under the administration of the Bureau of Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture the same year. All the CCC development work carried on in this area has been directed by the Biological Survey.

The improvement work completed has included removal of fire hazards, construction of telephone lines, lookout towers, truck trails, fences, bridges, tool boxes, alteration of dwellings, roadside clearing, clean-up for fire prevention and forest stand improvement, lake and pond development

work, food and cover planting for birds, eradication of poisonous weeds and development work to make the area more attractive to wild life. One of the projects undertaken by the CCC men during the last few months has been the creation of fresh water ponds through the development of dikes and levees.

A memorandum describing the Black Water Migratory Bird Refuge and the work accomplished there by the CCC which has been forwarded to the Office of Director Fechner by Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, Chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey, follows:

"The Blackwater Migratory Bird Refuge is located in Dorchester County, Maryland, about ten miles south of Cambridge along the Big Blackwater River in the vicinity of its junction with the Little Blackwater. This Refuge comprises 8,240 acres of land and water made up of the following types:

Timber	- 1057 Acres	Agriculture	- 371 Acres
Marsh	- 5295 Acres	Open Water	- 1455 Acres
(consisting of salt meadow-grass, three-square, cat-tail and needle grass)			
Brush, grazing, etc. - 62 Acres			

"Practically the entire marsh area is tidal in character and the water is brackish. The many ponds within the marsh serve as good resting areas for waterfowl.

"The marsh is surrounded by low timber land, consisting chiefly of pine, red maple, persimmon, willow and other deciduous trees. There are several small sandy islands scattered throughout the marsh, covered with pine trees and brush, which are desirable nesting sites for waterfowl. The Refuge is strategically located with reference to migratory waterfowl

concentrations, and is one of the most productive muskrat areas along the Atlantic Coast.

"The area was first examined in 1930 to determine whether suitable for Refuge purposes, and later purchased in 1932, at which time it was put under administration. The black duck and blue-wing teal are the principal waterfowl species nesting on this Refuge; however, in the early fall it is frequented by mallards and pintails, which are seen gathered in large flocks on the ponds scattered throughout the Refuge. Many shore birds are also found on the area. Quail and other upland birds have been seen along the margins of the marsh area.

"The Blackwater Refuge was fortunate in having one of the first CCC Camps to be placed on Biological Survey Refuges. This Camp was approved by the President May 29, 1933 and established on the Refuge July 5 of that year, and later discontinued November 21, 1933. It was again established October 8, 1934 and discontinued October 1, 1935, for the reason that contemplated improvements could not be made until expiration of Agricultural reservations in January, 1936. On May 27, 1936, it was again returned to the area, worked throughout the Seventh and part of the Eighth Periods during which time the work programs were practically completed. On December 8, 1936 this company will be moved to Camp F-22, Pembroke, Miles County, Virginia.

"Before the camp was established, the Refuge had been practically undeveloped owing to lack of funds. There was much work to be done, including removal of fire hazards, which was brought about by slash being

left in the timbered areas during logging operations. Many portions of the area were inaccessible because of lack of roads and trails, and facilities for proper administration were lacking. The camp was immediately put to work in reducing fire hazards, construction of telephone lines, lookout towers, truck-trails, fences, bridges, tool boxes, alteration of dwellings, roadside clearing, clean-up for fire prevention and forest stand improvement activities. This latter project was carried out with the idea of improving the present area from the wildlife point of view, the major objective of the work being to establish conditions favorable for birds and animals by leaving food and cover bearing plants. During the 4th, 5th and 7th periods, the camp on the Refuge carried on lake and pond development work, additional road and trail construction, razing of undesirable structures, removal of fire hazards, moving and reconditioning of fur animal pens and caretaker's house, headquarters improvement, erection of machine shop, office building, equipment storage shed, boat-house, seed collection, food and cover planting, eradication of poisonous weed, development of experimental plots, marking boundaries, roadside improvements and other work which has served to make the area more attractive to wildlife and easier for administration.

"One of the main jobs undertaken by the camp during this last period has been dike and levee construction necessary for creation of fresh water ponds. This job required 3,500 feet of dike and 1,400 feet of sheet piling, all of which is about completed.

"The CCC Camp made possible the accomplishment of work on this Refuge that otherwise could not have been carried out with funds available. Many

jobs were entirely new as far as improvement on this Refuge was concerned, this being particularly true in connection with lookout towers, telephone lines, dikes and levees, as the area was absolutely devoid of such improvements. The raising of food for waterfowl and improving conditions for growth of aquatic plants and cover have greatly enhanced the area as a migratory waterfowl refuge.

"Waterfowl observations made this year indicate that the waterfowl arrived a week or ten days earlier than usual, and that there was an increase in numbers of about ten percent.

"The camp workers engaged in work on this area and other Federal Refuges have had the opportunity of acquiring first-hand information on physical developments making for the betterment of Refuges for migratory birds and other forms of wildlife. The performance of this work by the enrollees has no doubt made many converts to the cause of conservation."